

JOINT LONG RANGE PLANNING COMMITTEE  
TREASURE STATE ENDOWMENT PROGRAM  
Grant Application Hearing  
January 11, 2007  
Sweet Grass County

Supporting Testimony;

Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee, for the record, my name is Jack Knorr, I am the Public Works Director for Sweet Grass County, Big Timber, Mt.

I am here this morning to testify in support of the Treasure State Endowment Program and Sweet Grass County's application for a grant from TSEP to replace some of our worn-out bridges.

The Treasure State Endowment Program is a Godsend for small and medium size cities and counties in Montana. Without this program, many counties such as Sweet Grass would not be able to repair or replace our aging bridges. We would, by necessity, have to close down some of these structures because of the safety concerns for the traveling public.

Each day, in the newspaper, I read that Montana has a billion dollar surplus this year. Everyone seems to have a plan to spend this windfall. But nowhere have I read that anyone is proposing to spend some of this money on local infrastructure.

**Our roads and bridges are in desperate need of additional revenue to bring them up to a safe standard.** That is where TSEP plays a crucial role for our cities and counties. TSEP's grant monies have made Sweet Grass County's bridges a safer place to travel.

Sweet Grass County has over 100 bridges that we must maintain. Our total bridge budget is less than \$193,000.00 per year. That's less than \$2,000.00 per bridge. Many of our bridges were built before the Second World War. These structures have, quite simply, outlived their design life and must be replaced or closed down. **We could not even replace one medium size bridge without TSEP's grant money.**

Many Counties and Cities are in the same boat as Sweet Grass.

Our needs increase, but our revenues do not.

I ask that this Committee look favorably on Sweet Grass County's request for this TSEP grant.

If the Committee has any questions we are happy to honor them.

Thank you for your time.

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